



The Parish of All Saints South Hobart

Diocese of Tasmania

Sunday 22 March 2020

Fourth Sunday in Lent - Refreshment Sunday

All Saints Church
S O U T H H O B A R T

The Gospel reading asks us to look differently at the world, to see it in a new way. It is all about sight, both physical and spiritual. The sight of a man born blind is restored and this reveals the blindness all around him, from his neighbours and family to the religious authorities and even Jesus' own disciples. Even the disciples are caught up, like everyone else, in the perspectives of their own day. To them and to their contemporaries, blindness, like all physical disorders, indicated some sort of sin. The religious authorities could not see the power of the blind man's experience because, for them, the only thing that mattered was that Jesus had violated the Sabbath by working a miracle of healing.

The blind man's neighbours could hardly recognise him after his sight was restored. It's tempting for us to hear the story and feel comfortable that we live in a culture that prides itself on its "tolerance" and sensitivity; but don't we have our own limitations of sight, just like the neighbours and the religious authorities?

Today, our Lenten journey reaches a place we call home: a place of safety where we are called to acknowledge our own blindness and seek Jesus' healing touch.

It is a risky place because it has the possibility of turning our neatly ordered worlds upside-down. The man born blind finds himself in unusual and unexpected places. Before, he was a beggar, scraping out a living on the fringes of society. After the man encounters Christ, he becomes unrecognisable to his neighbours and finds himself testifying to the power of God in the court of the religious authorities.

There is no doubt that our world has been turned upside-down in the last few weeks. People are being stranded and isolated; uncertainty and the fear that engenders is eating away at some; anger and frustration at not being able to change a situation; panic because some things are out of our control. All these human feelings can get in the way of being in touch with the place where we will find our strength.

Our eyes can be blind to the one who travels every day with us; the one who inspires,

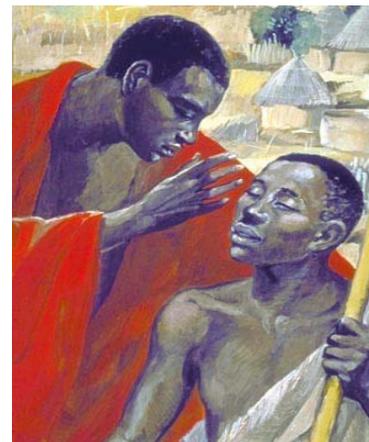
strengthens and renews. We need to look to the one whose light was our gift in Baptism and let that light open new eyes. We need to be ready to take a step back and to be prepared to see each other and the world through different eyes.

We must be ready to turn homeward, turn again to Christ and see the world as God sees it.

Meister Eckhardt wrote:

"The eye through which I see God is the same eye through which God sees me; my eye and God's eye are one eye, one seeing, one knowing, one love."

So then, how would the world look if we allowed Jesus to heal our blindness? We might find new ways of relating to God and each other - ways that we had not imagined before. We might even dare to think "outside the box" and see that God is greater than our ways of thought and being allow. We might even discover a Spirit that we thought we had lost, a Spirit that might bring us to new ways of witnessing to the power of Christ's light for a people we thought we could never reach. Ponder this, amidst the confusion of the world today, and get ready for Easter!



So our Lenten journey is indeed confronted by a great challenge today. Do we dare risk the journey of the man born blind? Christ is, in fact, asking us to put aside our old ways of seeing and to see, instead, through the eyes of God. And what we will see and how we will see remains a mystery until we actually dare to try - until we put our own blindness completely into the healing hands of the one who says,

"I am the light of the world."

Refreshment/Mothering Sunday

Here we are at the mid-point in our Lenten pilgrimage. There is some slackening in the austerity of the season today ... but still no alleluias.

In the Church in England this day was the one day of the year when all young people who had grown up and moved away in order to find employment, mainly in service at the houses of the gentry, were given the day off to return home to visit their families, and in particular their mothers. Two customs of those days survive.

Firstly, in the Church porches a light fruit cake called Simnel Cake and some drink would be available to refresh the travelers as they made their long journey on foot.

Secondly, the young people would pick flowers growing at the side of the roads, would make them into posies and take them to their mothers home as a gift.

The Church has continued and developed the customs of this day so today we remember and give thanks for those who have filled the role of mother for us.

We honour and give thanks for our Mother the Church who nurtures, feeds and sustains us with love on our spiritual journey.

We also give honour to Mary, the holy Mother of God the example *par excellence* of true faithfulness and obedience, marks of the true disciple of Christ. We recall her particularly as the lynch-pin in the small community that assembled at the foot of the cross. Here Jesus entrusted the beloved disciple to his Mother's care, and then him to her care. After Jesus' resurrection this small family became the infant Church.

The colour of the vestments for this day is Rose Pink, as are the small number of flowers in the Church, Both of which remind us of Mary, who in tradition is called "the Mystic Rose."

It is sad this day so rich in symbols and tradition has been overtaken by the May observance of "Mothers' Day."

Today is also called *Refreshment Sunday*. The leniency in the fast gives time to take stock of the inner place to which we have come in our Lenten observance and prepare ourselves to focus more single-mindedly upon the Passion of Christ over the next two weeks so that, in Holy Week, we may take part in the drama of the week as it unfolds through our liturgy.



HOW CAN I CONTINUE TO GIVE REGULARLY?

The first thing is to re-assure you that the Church is still operating. We may not be able to meet in the regular way for Mass or in our groups but the prayer of the Church is still going on daily, services are being provide online and telephone ministry is happening. In addition, bills will continue to flow in, even though some may be reduced through less use.

- The Wardens and Council ask you to consider again setting up a direct debit from your personal account. Details are:

Bank ANZ
BSB 067 002
Account Number 2801 6823
The reference is the service time you attend.

- Calling in to The Jesse Tree and making your offering by EFTPOS using your card.
- Ringing The Jesse Tree on 0438 094 661 and using your credit card over the phone.
- Dropping in your Weekly Giving Envelopes or cash offering in an envelope to The Jesse Tree.

BPay and PayPal will be available very shortly.

Thank you for your generous support, especially at this difficult time.

Assistance to Parishioners

We have an opportunity to live the faith we profess. Take the time to ring each other just to say hello.

Also, there may be parishioners over the coming months who, because of their isolation or self-isolation, are unable to do the regular shopping that would otherwise be part of their routine.

If you would be prepared to be part of a team that might be able to help in this way, please contact Andrea on 0407 417 355.

Likewise, if you find yourself in need of some assistance, *please* call Andrea on the phone number above. Don't be precious about it! We are a family and families help each other!

We will be happy to organise contactless drops for your safety.

Pray with us this Week

For the leaders of all nations during this time of crisis. Give them wisdom and compassion to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

For all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected by coronavirus and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

For medical researchers working to contain the virus and those searching for treatments or a vaccine: that they may be given wisdom and insight and the grace of perseverance.

For your Church as it seeks to be a sign of hope and renewal. We pray for Philip our Primate, Richard our Bishop, Chris Vicar General, health care chaplains, pastoral carers and the clergy and people of this Diocese. May they bring to those around them the healing presence and love of Christ.

For the sick, especially those who suffer from coronavirus or are in isolation, uncertain of their diagnosis; for those who mourn the loss of loved ones as a result of this virus; and for those who bear the burden of ongoing illness: Gordon, Peggy, Sallie, Robin Angela, Layton, Roslyn, John, Merle, Tony, David, Richard, Liz.

This is how one Parish Priest has celebrated daily Mass for his people ...



Study Groups can continue

The Study Groups can continue ... with existing members only.

Wednesday morning at 11.00am in the Eagle Centre
'Celtic Lent'

Saturday morning at 10.00am in the Eagle Centre
'Saturdays with the Sacraments'

We will observe social distancing and sanitization.



THE JESSE TREE

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10.30am to 3.30pm

Saturday
10.00am to 2.00pm

At this stage, The Jesse Tree is able to remain open. However, hours will depend on availability of staff.

Sadly, the All Saints Market has been closed until further notice.

We Need to support each other

.... and catch upon news!

If you have some news or something you would like to share with the parish, please contact Fr David on 04 1989 1409 or fatherdavid@bigpond.com and we will keep a 'news section' in each week's bulletin.

Our visiting and celebration of the Eucharist at BUPA Court and Lodge and Saint Ann's Home as well as our weekly Mass and visiting at Saint John's Hospital has been curtailed until further notice.

It is good to know that both Peggy Wilmshurst and Bernadette Irvine are home from hospital.

Henri Nouwen writes:

'Solitude is very different from a 'time-out' from our busy lives. Solitude is the very ground from which community grows. Whenever we pray alone, study, read, write, or simply spend quiet time away from the places where we interact with each other directly, we are potentially opened for a deeper intimacy with each other.'

FIRST READING**Ephesians 5: 8-14**

For once you were darkness, but now in the Lord you are light. Live as children of light – for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says,

‘Sleeper, awake!

Rise from the dead,

and Christ will shine on you.’

HOLY GOSPEL**John 9: 1-41**

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, ‘Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?’ Jesus answered, ‘Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God’s works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.’ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man’s eyes, saying to him, ‘Go, wash in the pool of Siloam’ (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, ‘Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?’ Some were saying, ‘It is he.’ Others were saying, ‘No, but it is someone like him.’ He kept saying, ‘I am the man.’ But they kept asking him, ‘Then how were your eyes opened?’ He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, “Go to Siloam and wash.” Then I went and washed and received my sight.’ They said to him, ‘Where is he?’ He said, ‘I do not know.’

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, ‘He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.’ Some of the Pharisees said, ‘This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.’ But others said, ‘How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?’ And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, ‘What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.’ He said, ‘He is a prophet.’

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them,

‘Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?’ His parents answered, ‘We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.’ His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, ‘He is of age; ask him.’



So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, ‘Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.’ He answered, ‘I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.’ They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’ He answered them, ‘I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?’ Then they reviled him, saying, ‘You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.’ The man answered, ‘Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’ They answered him, ‘You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?’ And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ He answered, ‘And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.’ He said, ‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshipped him. Jesus said, ‘I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.’ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, ‘Surely we are not blind, are we?’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, “We see”, your sin remains.